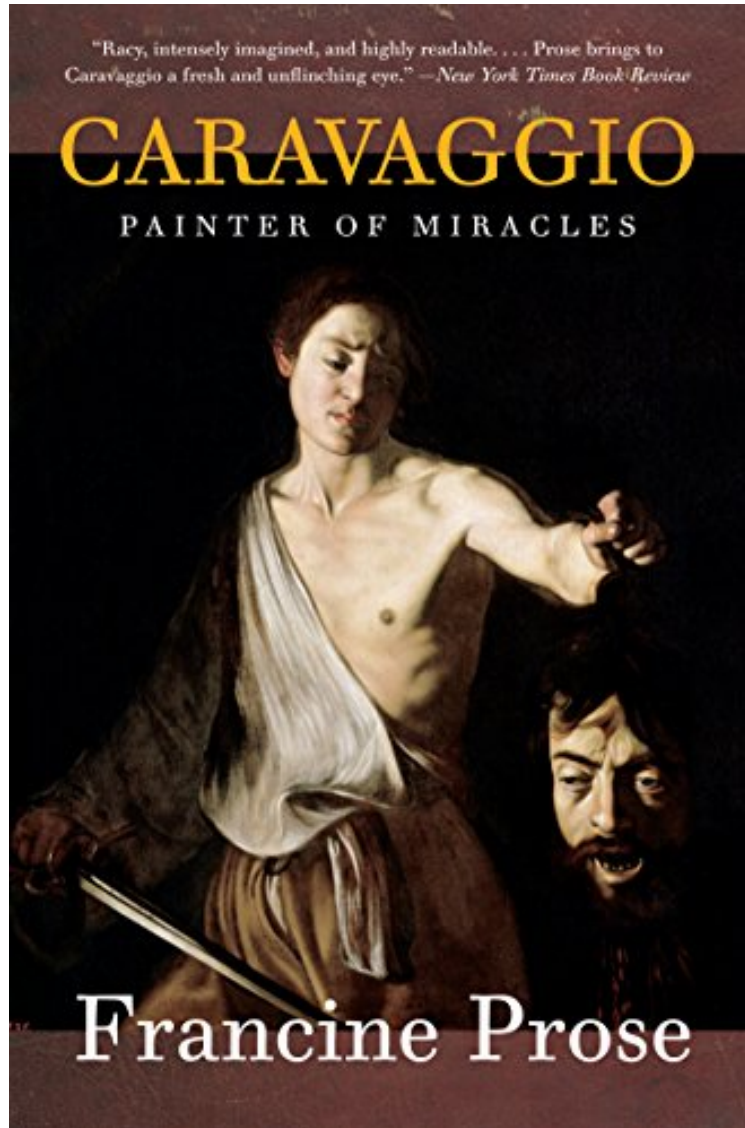



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Caravaggio: Painter of Miracles (Eminent Lives)

Francine Prose

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Francine Prose : Caravaggio: Painter of Miracles (Eminent Lives) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Caravaggio: Painter of Miracles (Eminent Lives):

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volume. Well written in an engaging and entertaining fashion.

Matching gorgeous prose to gorgeous artworks, Prose responds to each image as a moment of theatrical revelation, sensual or spiritual, and frequently both. Boston Sunday Globe In Caravaggio, New York Times bestselling author Francine Prose (Goldengrove, Reading like a Writer) offers an enthralling account of the life and work of one of the greatest painters of all time. Called racy, intensely imagined, and highly readable by the New York Times Book Review, Caravaggio includes eight pages of color illustrations, and is sure to appeal to art enthusiasts interested in one of history's true innovators. Caravaggio is another engaging entry in the HarperCollins's Eminent Lives series of biographies by distinguished authors on canonical figures.

From Publishers Weekly The first thing to know about this life of the Italian baroque painter Caravaggio is that it is not a proper biography but rather an informal appreciation by novelist and occasional art critic Prose (Blue Angel). As with the other volumes in the Eminent Lives series, groundbreaking research is not expected. Fair enough. Yet despite her obvious love for the artist, Prose has little of substance to say about him. Once she dispatches with the basic points of the artist's life—that Caravaggio defied the fashion for mannered, pious painting with a gritty but theatrical realism that mirrored the artist's turbulent life—she resorts to the puffed-up style of a student trying to reach a term paper's required length. She stuffs her pages with redundant adjectives ("wan, exhausted, used up," "constant and unchanged") and finds no point too trite to repeat three times: "You can watch an artist realizing that what he is doing is succeeding, that the paint is doing precisely what he wants it to do, that his intention and purpose are finding their way onto the canvas." Even those with only a casual interest in the artist would be better served by Helen Langdon's 1998 biography *Caravaggio: A Life*, which is as accessible as it is scholarly and is now out in paperback. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist One of Prose's many gifts is her ability to quickly and vividly establish a context for the personalities she so acutely portrays, whether it's a fictional character or, in her discerning nonfiction, a real-life figure in the art world. Here she focuses on the revolutionary Italian artist Caravaggio. A contemporary of Shakespeare, Caravaggio was "belligerent, contemptuous, and competitive," a revered artist and a notorious street fighter wanted for murder who died at 39 under tragic circumstances. Much has been written about Caravaggio and his dramatic paintings, especially his daringly earthy depictions of biblical scenes, but somehow Prose's concentrated interpretation has a stronger impact. Not only does she cover all the biographical essentials but she also more clearly and descriptively explicates the pioneering painter's unique perception of the miraculous in everyday life. Prose also reveals, with both subtlety and flourish, how Caravaggio's frank interpretations of violence and pain, fear and grief, dignity and transcendence are matched with a brilliant subversion of our sense of reality. Donna Seaman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved Tautly written and insightful.